



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

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Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor James L. Streeter, Councilors Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Paulann H. Sheets, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Streeter called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Watson

Members Absent: Councilor Johnson, Councilor Peruzzotti and Councilor Sheets

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

2011-0035 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meetings of December 21, 2010 and January 25, 2011 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to adopt.

The motion carried unanimously

5. NEW BUSINESS

2010-0249 FYE 2012 Groton Long Point Highway Budget

Discussed

Bob Congdon and Rich Moravsik were in attendance, representing Groton Long Point. The Council received a summary of the Groton Long Point roads budget for FYE 2012 (CIP and operating budget). Mr. Moravsik explained that since the last meeting, the traffic light project was moved from the CIP to the operating budget.

Councilors Sheets, Peruzzotti, and Johnson arrived at 6:05 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Streeter, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Watson

Discussed

Mr. Moravsik continued to review specifics of the Groton Long Point highway budget request. He noted that he is still hopeful that he will receive a surplus vehicle from the Town. The Town Manager noted that the vehicle that was offered to Groton Long Point was refused, and there will be no additional surplus vehicles available this year. It was suggested that Groton Long Point approach the City of Groton about a surplus vehicle.

Mr. Moravsik noted a letter that was sent to the Town Manager on May 25, 2010 stating that Groton Long Point took exception to the RTM's reduction of Groton Long Point's pavement

projects for FYE 2011. He feels it was a violation of Groton Long Point's charter. Mr. Moravsik directed the Council's attention to the Groton Long Point Charter regarding the highway budget and dispute resolution. Groton Long Point wants clarification about the RTM's authority to reduce Groton Long Points CIP requests. The highway funds, whether they are called capital improvements or operating expenses, are necessary. The Town Manager noted that this same discussion occurred with the City. If a project meets the criteria of a capital improvement, it is subject to the Town's approval process including review and action by the RTM. The issue is not providing highway funds, but determining what is "necessary". The Town Manager cautioned Groton Long Point that the Charter addresses annual contributions so that if a project can not be done in the course of the fiscal year, then the Town may not be responsible for it. If Groton Long Point continues to be concerned with the RTM's cut, the Town Manager suggested that they enact the arbitration process. Discussion followed on the RTM's action.

Councilor O'Beirne suggested that Groton Long Point's CIP request is very high when comparing it to the lengths of road in the Town and City. Discussion followed on the goals of the Pavement Management Program. Councilor O'Beirne stated he will reserve judgment on Groton Long Point's request until he sees what the Town and City put in for pavement management. The Town Manager noted that the Town is proposing repaving only one stretch of road at a cost of \$125,000. Mr. Moravsik listed the roads in Groton Long Point proposed for repaving. The Town Manager stated there is an outstanding question about a section of Groton Long Point Road and whether it is controlled by the Town or Groton Long Point. Mr. Moravsik suggested that the replacement roadside barriers are a safety issue.

With respect to the Beach Road Bridge project, seven bids were submitted ranging from \$1.25 million to \$520,000. Groton Long Point's engineer looked at the lowest bids and chose one contractor that met the requirements (\$560,000). One issue cited by the contractors was the need to remove overhead lines and provide temporary service. Mr. Moravsik noted that Groton Long Point is willing to push back repaving of two roads, reducing the CIP request by \$190,000.

The Town Manager suggested that the costs associated with the water line suspended beneath the bridge be discussed because he does not believe that portion of the project falls under road maintenance so there is a question as to who should pay for it.

It was noted that the Mayor sent a letter to Groton Long Point requesting budget options including 5% and 10% reductions. Mr. Moravsik stated that Groton Long Point does not have any options for cutting back because there is no "fat" in the budget. Councilor Flax stated that the Town does not have any "extra" in the budget and cuts will mean people.

Councilor Monteiro noted that although Groton Long Point may need tools and equipment, the public has an issue with funding multiple public works operations.

Mayor Streeter stated he will ask for a legal opinion on the charter. The consensus of the Council was to place the request for supplemental funding for the Beach Road Bridge Project on the next Committee of the Whole agenda for consideration.

2011-0024**FYE 2010 CAFR****Discussed**

Director of Finance Sal Pandolfo introduced Vanessa Rossitto from Blum Shapiro and Cindy Landry, Town Treasurer. Ms. Rossitto explained that the Comprehensive Audit and Financial Report (CAFR) is a snapshot of what happened to the Town during the fiscal year. It provides valuable information for creditors and investors. The report is broken into three sections: Introductory, Financial, and Statistical. Ms. Rossitto explained that Blum Shapiro has provided an unqualified or clean opinion on the Town's financial statements. Ms. Rossitto reviewed various components of the report. Discussion followed on Town and Board of Education encumbrances.

Councilor O'Beirne requested information on the reported lease expenditures and what properties the Town leases. Mr. Pandolfo stated he would provide a list.

Ms. Rossitto then reviewed comments and recommendations that were made regarding internal controls at the Board of Education.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2011-0037 Mystic and Noank Library Study Committee - Update

Discussed

Councilor O'Beirne reported on the meeting of the Mystic and Noank Library Study Committee and the development of a formula to determine Groton's and Stonington's contribution to the library. The formula for Groton's contribution includes the addition of a "tax value offset," a soft number developed by Lois Hiller to reflect the value to the homeowners in the neighborhood for having a nice library nearby. The formula for Stonington's contribution deducts "state reimbursement," the ConnectiCard reimbursement that is directly attributed to Stonington. Groton's five year average contribution has been well above the formula amount; Stonington's has been well below. The Committee agreed that the formula results in legitimate numbers, but the Stonington Board of Finance has indicated it will not double its contribution. Councilor O'Beirne noted that the Mystic and Noank Library is currently operating a five-day week. He feels the library is run efficiently and by his calculation offers "more bang for the buck" than Groton Public Library.

2010-0124 Review of Town Council Goals

Discussed

Mayor Streeter briefly reviewed the status of some of the Town Council goals and asked that discussion of the remaining goals be placed on a future agenda.

2011-0032 Sister Cities Committee - Update

Discussed

Mayor Streeter stated he is waiting to hear from the RTM and Board of Education about their appointees to the Committee.

2010-0172 FYE 2012 Budget

Discussed

Councilor O'Beirne indicated he would like to meet with local legislators about the state's budget. The Governor's budget will be presented on February 16th. Mayor Streeter requested a morning meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor O'Beirne, seconded by Councilor Watson, to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.